

Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests and Prineville District, Bureau of Land Management

Office of Communications

Working as One to Serve Central Oregon

News and Information
For Immediate Release
September 30, 2002

Contacts: Virginia Gibbons
(541) 416-6647
Dan Tippy
(541) 416-6729

Cause of Canine Fatalities at Recreation Site Remain Unknown

CENTRAL OREGON—In early August, the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management received information from Oregon State Police regarding the unusual death of four dogs. The investigation was turned over to Prineville BLM law enforcement officials.

The four dogs died on July 27, 2002 at the Priest Hole Recreation Area along the John Day River. The dogs were not on leashes at all times, but they were supervised. During the outing, the dogs began to exhibit muscle contractions and seizures and within 45 minutes, all four dogs had died. The remains of one of the dogs was taken to a veterinary clinic in Bend, where samples were collected and sent away for toxicology analysis.

The cause of the dogs' death remains unknown. While the history strongly suggests the possibility of a toxic substance, the lab was unable to identify a toxin from the samples submitted. The gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy analysis is able to identify approximately 20,000 chemical/substances. In addition, tests were negative for common convulsants such as strychnine and bromethalin.

“Numerous people were very concerned and called us on several occasions to inquire about the status of the lab reports,” said Mary D’Aversa, Assistant Field Manager for the Central Oregon Resource Area.

No further information regarding the cause of death is expected. The Prineville District BLM appreciates the generosity of the Ringer family and also the staff of the Cascade Animal Emergency Clinic for sharing and interpreting medical information pertaining to this unfortunate incident.

-end-

